

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA
CHARLESTON DIVISION

B.P.J. by her next friend and mother, HEATHER JACKSON,

Plaintiff,

v.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, HARRISON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, WEST VIRGINIA SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES COMMISSION, W. CLAYTON BURCH in his official capacity as State Superintendent, DORA STUTLER in her official capacity as Harrison County Superintendent, and THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

Defendants,

and

LAINY ARMISTEAD,

Defendant-Intervenor.

Civil Action No. 2:21-cv-00316

Hon. Joseph R. Goodwin

DECLARATION OF HEATHER JACKSON

I, Heather Jackson, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declare as follows:

1. I make this declaration of my own personal knowledge, and, if called as a witness,

I could and would testify competently to the matters stated herein.

2. On April 19, 2022, I signed a declaration for my attorneys to submit to the court.

3. I am 54 years old. I am the mother of two sons, ages 21 and 14, and a 12-year-old daughter. I live in Lost Creek, West Virginia.

4. My daughter's name is B.P.J. B.P.J. has been on puberty delaying treatment since 2020, under the care of a multidisciplinary team of medical providers with expertise in treating transgender adolescents.

5. In June of 2022, under the care of Dr. Kacie Kidd and her team at the West Virginia University Department of Pediatrics, B.P.J. and I were told that B.P.J. was eligible to start hormone therapy. B.P.J. had pure joy and radiance in her eyes when she realized her body could develop in a way that matches what her brain is telling her. After we spoke as a family, and after we spoke in-depth with her medical and mental health providers, B.P.J. was prescribed estradiol, an estrogen-based hormone therapy, which she has been taking for the last seven months. B.P.J. is very comfortable with her treatment plan and is so excited for her body to go through puberty in a way that matches who she is.

6. For the past year and a half—thanks to the court’s injunction order—participating on Bridgeport Middle School’s girls’ cross-country and track teams has meant everything to my daughter. Having the opportunity to play on the girls’ teams is important to B.P.J. because she feels her happiest when she is out on the field making friends and competing in one of her favorite sports. She is a gracious teammate and an incredible motivator, and she always tries to have as much fun as possible!

7. After running with her cross-country team in the Fall of 2021, B.P.J. was so excited for Spring track-and-field in 2022. Although B.P.J. was not fast enough to make the track-and-field team in running events, her coach, Ms. Schoonmaker, encouraged her to try out for the field events, and B.P.J. focused on shotput and discus. B.P.J. loved taking on a new challenge, was able to make the team, and participated in meets for those two field events. At the Connect Bridgeport Middle School Invitational, B.P.J. placed 36 out of 45 participants in shotput, and 29 out of 29 participants in discus; at the Ritchie Middle School Pizza Box Invitational, B.P.J. placed 15 out of 25 participants in discus; and at the Harry Green Middle School Invitational, B.P.J. placed 57 out

of 61 participants in shotput, and 35 out of 53 participants in discus. B.P.J.'s 2022 track-and-field meet records are attached hereto as Exhibit A.

8. After participating on the cross-country and track-and-field teams for both seasons in the 2021-2022 school year, it was no surprise to me that B.P.J. carried this interest into her seventh-grade year, and tried out for, and made, the girls' cross-country team again in the Fall of 2022. During this second cross-country season of hers, B.P.J. participated in several meets with her teammates. At the Charles Point Invitation, B.P.J. placed 54 out of 55 participants; at the Mountain Holler Middle School Invitational, B.P.J. placed 43 out of 53 participants; at the Taylor County Middle School Invitational, B.P.J. placed 38 out of 46 participants; at the Elkins Middle School Invitational, B.P.J. placed 78 out of 80 participants; and at the Mid-Mountain 10 Conference Middle School Championships, B.P.J.'s final race of the season, B.P.J. finished 64 out of 65 participants. B.P.J. did not participate in any additional meets after her final race due to a toe injury that she has since recovered from. B.P.J.'s 2022 cross-country meet records are attached hereto as Exhibit B.

9. B.P.J. has been excited about trying out for track again this spring and has been planning to do so. Tryouts will take place on February 27, 2023.

10. My daughter's love for participating in school sports is a precious thing. B.P.J. loves all the friends she has made on the girls' cross-country and track teams, trying her best at every practice and meet, and being a team player. In her two years of sports with Bridgeport Middle School, B.P.J. has not encountered any problems with any of her teammates or children from any other schools, and her coaches and teachers have been extremely supportive of her participation. I have never seen my daughter happier than when I pick her up from practices and take her to meets. Photos from B.P.J.'s 2022 cross-country season are attached as Exhibit C.

11. This new year of 2023 has been incredibly difficult for B.P.J. I watched my daughter run upstairs to her room in tears after I told her about the recent ruling against her and removing the injunction that allowed her to participate as the girl she is. She was devastated and cried for the entire night and told me that she was terrified about not being able to continue doing the thing that she loves with her friends. The next morning, B.P.J. told me that although she is very sad, she will never stop fighting for her right to play with her teammates and to be treated equally.

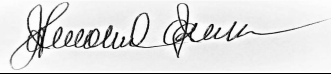
12. Forcing B.P.J. to compete on the boys' cross-country or track-and-field teams would profoundly harm her, erase who she actually is, and make participating in the school sports that bring her so much joy impossible for her. She cannot be the person she is and compete on the boys' team.

13. My daughter is a twelve-year old girl who just wants the same opportunities as the other girls in her school. By refusing to treat her as a girl and singling her out for different treatment than all the other girls, West Virginia sends a clear message that it refuses to see her, accept her, and respect her equally to others. My daughter will be forever harmed if she is not able to compete alongside her teammates and friends as she has done so happily for the past year and a half.

* * *

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on January 20, 2023

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heather Jackson", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Heather Jackson